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Human Services Committee Minutes from Monday January 14th, 2008

In Attendance:

Members:

Bob Gleeson Northern Illinois University
Walt Meyers Northeast Illinois Area on Aging

Tammy Wierciak Metropolitan Mayors Caucus/Council of Mayors

Jay Ciavarella RTA

Jim Lewis Chicago Community Trust

Lynn O'Shea Association for Individual Development (AID)

Holly Smith Kane County DOT

Lorrie Lynn United Way of Metro Chicago

Guest:

Rebecca Hendrick UIC

Becky Schedin Age Options

Andrew Parker Pace
Karen Mossberger UIC
Elsa Gutierrez CTA

Sheri Cohen Chicago Department of Public Health

Steven Brown U of C Hospitals

Mark Nueffer Integer Research & Consulting, LLC

CMAP Staff:

Russell Pietrowiak CMAP Staff
Bob Dean CMAP Staff
Jon Hallas CMAP Staff
Kermit Wies CMAP Staff
Drew Williams-Clark CMAP Staff

The Human Services Committee meeting commenced at 10:05am.

- 1.0 Introductions
- 2.0 Approval of Minutes
 Minutes of the December 10, 2007 committee meeting were approved.
- 3.0 Chair Comments
 - 3.1 Phil Smith gave a brief summary of topics discussed at the planning coordinating committee meeting, including forming a partnership between CMAP and the Chicago Community Trust for the purpose of indicator

- development. Specifically, CMAP will rely on the Trust for staff support in development of human service indicators.
- 3.2 The Programming and Planning Coordinating committee meetings have been rescheduled to separate times and months. In the past they meet at the same time on the same day, now they will meet on alternating months.
- 3.3 Russell Pietrowiak will email a schedule of upcoming meetings to committee members.

4.0 Human Services Committee Information

- 4.1 Forecast Data Discussion: Kermit Wies, CMAP Deputy Executive Director of Research and Analysis, gave a presentation, entitled "Demographic Projections and Regional Scenario Evaluation." Russell Pietrowiak will email the PowerPoint to committee members.
 - 4.1.1 Walt Meyers asked about the ability to project descriptions of non-geographic communities. Kermit Wies said that planners have to consider and weigh uncertainties for that very reason.
 - 4.1.2 Bob Gleeson suggested narrowing down the range of possibilities or making measurements more consistent because it may be more useful to build stable models to deal with a changing region.

 Kermit Wies responded that CMAP is mandated to plan for 2040, but he conceded that it is difficult to assume little variation in a dynamic system for the purpose of predicting possible policy outcomes.
 - 4.1.3 Russell Pietrowiak reviewed committee member questions pertaining to modeling/forecasting from prior meetings. These especially focused on CMAP's ability to forecast certain variables, such as race and income.
 - 4.1.4 Phil Smith reiterated the idea that forecasting can ultimately have an impact itself on regional demographic dynamics. Kermit Wies reiterated that CMAP is not good at predicting new policies, only the impacts of policies.
 - 4.1.5 Walt Meyers suggested looking at investments in education and the outcomes on income from an investment perspective. Kermit Wies cautioned that this group will have to think about the fact that they will need to quantify ideas that are not normally quantified. Bob Dean responded that we will construct multiple forecasts based on bundles of policies.
 - 4.1.6 Jim Lewis asked what CMAP is doing to improve the modeling of things that researchers have not modeled. Kermit Wies responded that CMAP will use two approaches: 1) data collection and acquisition of private data; and 2) careful identification of basic relationships between cause and effect (hypothesis building). Jim Lewis asked if, for example, CMAP intends to identify the inputs that create a well educated child? Kermit Wies responded that CMAP will base a series of assumptions on research and multiple expert opinions.

- 4.1.7 Russell Pietrowiak reiterated that he will respond to any additional questions via email.
- 4.2 Delivering Human Services information: Mark Neuffer, President of Integer Research & Consulting, LLC gave a presentation, entitled "A Scan of Human Services Information Delivery." Russell Pietrowiak will send the PowerPoint file to committee members via email when it becomes available.
 - 4.2.1 Tammy Wierciak asked about human services information delivery to those who do not have internet access. Mark Neuffer recognized the need and responded that his scan demonstrates the need to engage groups in the delivery of information, regardless of vehicle. His research also identified examples of websites specifically catering to less savvy users. He believes that the next step must be to anticipate content and delivery based on target audience.
 - 4.2.2 Jim Lewis pointed out MCIC has information on human services delivery.
 - 4.2.3 Bob Gleeson pointed out that the scan focused on human services information delivery in ten cities and asked if anyone had taken the issue from another angle, using "software bots" programmed with different characteristics to answer specific questions? Mark Neuffer suggested that both research methodologies are necessary. He also suggested that there need to be conventions for description of information and delivery.
 - 4.2.4 Two researchers in the audience pointed out statistics that describe the digital divide: 30% of Americans have never been online, 50% use the internet regularly. However, they also suggested that while older, disabled and low-income groups are not online many have linkages to an online community through friends and family. Also, internet-based information delivery is important to service providers.
 - 4.2.5 Walt Meyers noted that from a regional planning perspective, government has the responsibility to provide consumers with valid information. As the committee moves forward, public human services information distribution should be the goal. Mark Neuffer agreed, with strategic points on funding origins, etc.
- 4.3 Defining Human Services: Russell Pietrowiak proposed continuing the conversation over email. He has created a list of options and is waiting for committee feedback.
- 4.4 Baseline Data Discussion
 - 4.4.1 Russell Pietrowiak pointed out that CMAP will need model inputs and baseline datasets to begin forecasting. Bob Dean will describe the indicators project at the next committee meeting.

- 4.4.2 Jim Lewis noted that modeling human services data is extremely difficult: lit review, identify predictive variables. He suggested that the process should begin with an intensive lit review and identification of baseline data. Russell Pietrowiak reiterated resource constraints. Jim Lewis reiterated the difficulty of predicting human service information without proper background.
- 4.4.3 Phil Smith wanted to know precisely which variables are most used and relied upon by the human services sector.
- 4.4.4 Bob Gleeson reiterated that there are not really any good nonlinear models for predicting human services outcomes. Therefore, CMAP should put effort into coming up with a solid understanding of current conditions and perhaps project into the near term by estimating short term policy effects. He felt that it would be impossible to come up with accurate projections out to 2040, because the research community would disregard the idea out-of-hand.
- 4.4.5 Russell Pietrowiak suggested that CMAP would be looking for drivers of demand and how those influence change.
- 4.4.6 Phil Smith noted that it would be important to consider the viability of creating a human services model of impacts in 30 years down the road.
- 4.4.7 Bob Dean noted that human services modeling would be, to some degree, less robust. However, CMAP cannot ignore the entire sector. CMAP is grateful to CCT for resource assistance in this area especially.
- 4.4.8 Walt Meyers suggested that at the end of the day, CMAP will end up with a human services thermometer, taking into account the plausibility of determining cause and effect relationships, then use demand models possibly to predict outcomes.

5.0 Comprehensive Regional Plan:

- 5.1 Strategy Research: Bob Dean started out by reiterating the definition of strategy as it pertains to the comprehensive plan as "actions the region can take." He presented a list of proposed strategies by committee and list of human services strategy proposals. He also asked for feedback and priorities for strategy research by the next meeting.
- 5.2 Joan Frankel suggested adding prisoner reentry as a strategy research topic.
- 5.3 Russell Pietrowiak clarified distinction between snapshot and strategy report.
- 5.4 Jon Hallas clarified that he is now writing two regional snapshot reports on the Latino and the aging population.
- 5.5 Tammy Wierciak asked if CMAP will include the Polish population in a snapshot report. John Hallas said that at this point CMAP had not planned to do so. Walt Meyers suggested writing a snapshot report on the limited English proficiency population as a way to triangulate several populations.

6.0 Other

- RTA (JARC/NF): This is a coordinated human services transportation plan, including a call for projects (www.jarcnf.rtachicago.com). Proposals will be due March 20. They are now focusing on outreach. Caveat: contact RTA on nuances of federal program and parameters. RTA will be giving a presentation on the plan and CFP. Russell Pietrowiak will send out details. Russell Pietrowiak reminded the committee that RTA has jurisdiction over all of the urban areas of the region, but not necessarily the rural ones.
- 6.2 Three researchers from UIC spoke about their upcoming research in social service delivery systems. They will be doing some mapping of these systems and conducting a survey of municipalities and sub-county governments.
- 7.0 Next Meeting: February 11th, 10:00am
- 8.0 Adjournment